

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 7322

S E C R E T CAIRO 10501

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS EG

SUBJECT: OCTOBER 22 TRANSIT OF ISRAELI CARGO
THROUGH SUEZ CANAL

REF A. CAIRO 10482; B. STATE 248421 (TOSEC 160025)

1. IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT REFTEL B, WHICH I SAW AFTER REFTEL A HAD BEEN SENT, I ASKED TO SEE FAHMY TO CONVEY NECESSARY INFORMATION. I HAVE JUST COME FROM A MEETING WITH HIM. WHEN I GAVE HIM THE INFORMATION, HE GROANED. WHY WOULD THE ISRAELIS HAVE TO CHOOSE A CARGO FROM SOUTH AFRICA? AS THEY AND WE ARE AWARE, THERE ARE UN AND EVEN STRONGER OAU EMBARGO PROCEDURES IN EFFECT AGAINST ANYTHING COMING FROM SOUTH AFRICA. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHETHER TITLE TO A CARGO HAS ALREADY PASSED TO A NEW OWNER. IF THE ORIGIN IS SOUTH AFRICAN, IT IS EMBARGOED AND SUBJECT TO CONFISCATION. THE SCA AUTHORITIES HAVE ALREADY CONFISCATED A CARGO OF RHODESIAN ORIGIN.

2. AFFIRMING THAT ALL ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR AN ISRAELI CARGO TO TRANSIT ON OCTOBER 22, FAHMY SAID HE COULD NOT ALSO ASK THAT CARGO OF SOUTH AFRICAN ORIGIN BE ALLOWED TO PASS THROUGH. THERE WILL BE ENOUGH OUTCRY AT HOME AND IN THE ARAB WORLD ABOUT AN ISRAELI CARGO TRANSITING; THIS

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WILL ONLY BE COMPOUNDED IF IT ALSO INVOLVES

VIOLATION OF THE UN AND OAU RESOLUTIONS EMBARGOING OF SOUTH AFRICAN ORIGIN GOODS. HE HAD TO WARN US THAT THERE IS A "BIG RISK" IN TRYING TO USE THE NETA CARGO AS THE TEST CASE. THERE IS A "FIFTY-FIFTY" CHANCE THAT THE CARGO WILL BE SEIZED BECAUSE OF ITS SOUTH AFRICAN ORIGIN. HE COULD NOT INTERVENE IN THIS MATTER.

3. FAHMY EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT WE, WHO SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN EMBARGO ISSUE, HAD NOT ADVISED THE ISRAELIS TO CHOOSE A CARGO FROM A NON-CONTROVERSIAL DESTINATION. HE REQUESTED THAT WE URGENTLY CONTACT THE ISRAELIS TO TELL THEM (A) ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR AN ISRAELI CARGO TO TRANSIT THE CANAL AS OF OCTOBER 22, BUT (B) THAT THEY SHOULD APPRECIATE THE PROBLEM POSED BY SOUTH AFRICAN ORIGIN OF THE

CEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE (#)

DAY DELAY.

AS INDICATED ABOVE, HE IS WORRIED THAT THE AUTHORITIES -- THOUGH INSTRUCTED TO PERMIT ISRAELI CARGO THROUGH -- WILL FEEL BOUND TO ACT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICAN ORIGIN CARGO AND IS UNWILLING TO STICK HIS NECK OUT BY APPEARING TO BE EVADING UN/OAU EMBARGO REGULATIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA. HE ASKED FOR A FLASH ANSWER TO HIS SUGGESTION.

4. MEANWHILE, AT HIS REQUEST I GAVE THE SHIP DATA CITED REFTEL TO HIS CHEF DE CABINET, OSAMA AL BAZ, FOR HIS INFORMATION.

5. COMMENT: IT APPEARS MOST SHORTSIGHTED THAT THE ISRAELIS SHOULD CHOOSE A SOUTH AFRICAN ORIGIN CARGO FOR THE TEST RUN. IF IT SOMEHOW GOES THROUGH, AND WORD OF IT GETS OUT, SADAT
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WILL BE DOUBLY EMBARRASSED. IF THE EGYPTIANS SEIZE IT BECAUSE OF ITS SOUTH AFRICAN ORIGINS, THE ISRAELIS WILL SCREAM THAT GOE HAS RENEGED. IT WOULD SEEM REASONABLE TO TAKE THIS UP WITH THE ISRAELIS AND URGE STRONGLY THAT THEY CHOOSE A CARGO WHICH DOES NOT COMPOUND THE UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY SADT IS ALREADY BOUND RECEIVE AS A RESULT OF PERMITTING AN ISRAELI CARGO TO GO THROUGH.

6. SUGGEST THIS MESSAGE BE PASSED TO THE SECRETARY
AND TEL AVIV WITH REQUEST FOR FLASH REPLY. TIME
IS RUNNING SHORT.
EILTS

NOTE BY OC/T: CAIRO 10501. (#)OMISSION IN PARA 3. CORRECTION
TO FOLLOW.

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NNN

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